

SKIT ACTIVITY: GROUP F

Read the following excerpt from the *Mencius*.

Mencius (370–290 B.C.E.)—one of the most famous Confucian scholars. He helped further Confucian teachings, in particular the notion that human beings are basically good.

benevolence—goodness; one of the most important Confucian virtues

He who loves others is always loved by them; he who respects others is always respected by them. Suppose a man treats one in an outrageous manner. Faced with this, a gentleman will say to himself, "I must be lacking in benevolence and courtesy, or how could such a thing happen to me?" When, looking into himself, he finds that he has been benevolent and courteous, and yet this outrageous treatment continues, then the gentleman will say to himself, "I must have failed to do my best for him." When, on looking into himself, he finds that he has done his best and yet this outrageous treatment continues, then the gentleman will say, "This man does not know what he is doing. Such a person is no different from an animal. One cannot expect an animal to know any better."¹³

1. Circle the statement that best matches the meaning of this excerpt. Check with the teacher once you have decided.
 - Every person has his/her place in society.
 - Duties to one's parents are of utmost importance.
 - Promote those who are most able.
 - Human beings are naturally good.
 - There are proper ways to treat the elderly and the young.
 - When others do not treat you well, think of how you could improve yourself.
2. According to Mencius, how should someone respond if he/she has been treated badly by another person?
3. Even when you are trying your best and yet you continue to be treated badly by another person, what does Mencius suggest you should assume about the other person? Can you think of a type of response he would *not* suggest?
4. As a group, prepare a presentation of this excerpt. Your presentation should
 - have participation by all group members;
 - clearly portray the meaning behind this excerpt in a **modern-day context** (such as in a classroom, school, or a current event); and
 - be interesting and creative.